

Thursday
May 10,
1984

C
Section

Living

The Tribune-Star

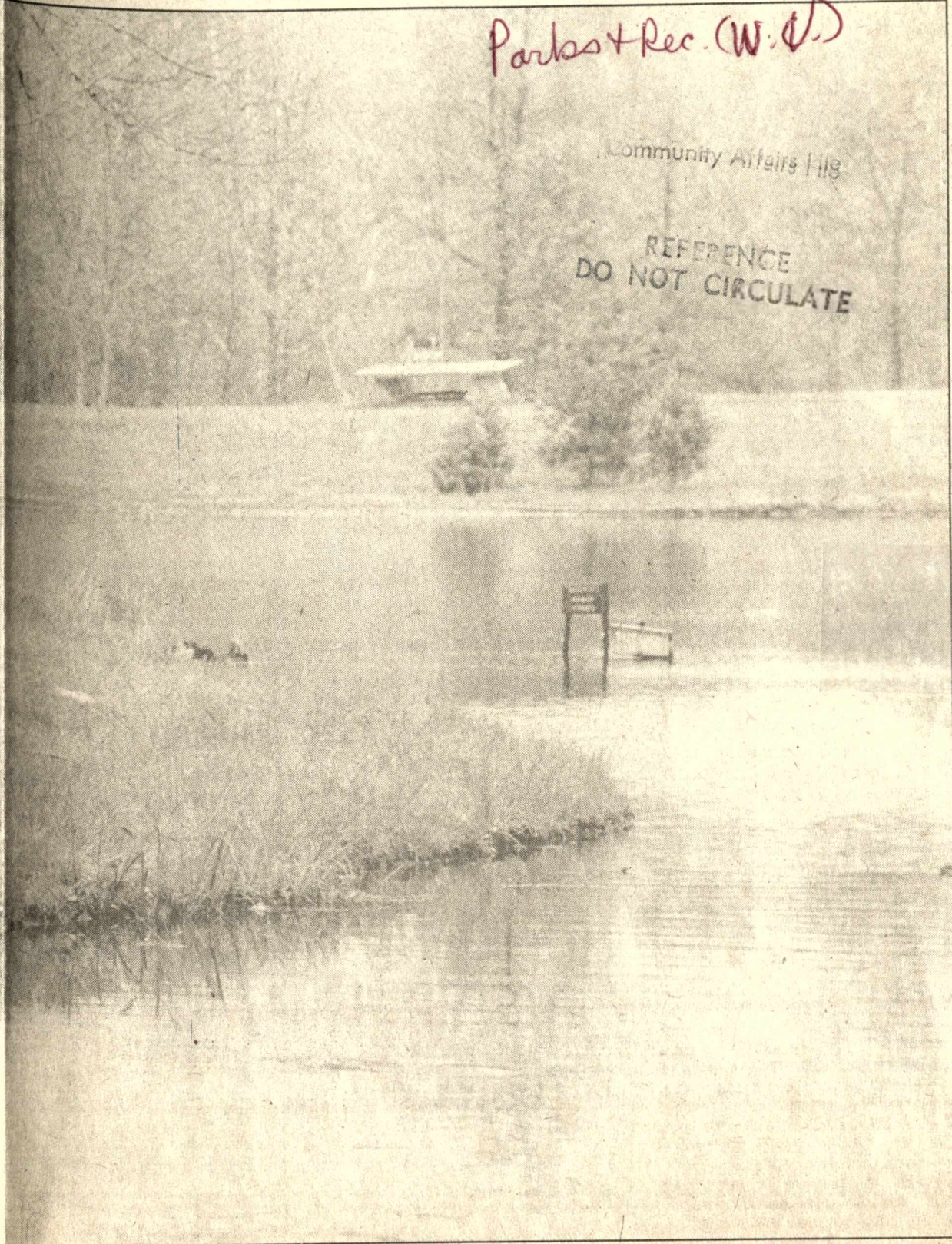
Inside this section...

Advice.....	C2	Crosswords.....	C10
Business.....	C5	Nation.....	C3-4
Classifieds.....	C7-9	TV listings.....	C11
Comics.....	C10-11	World.....	C6,12



Testing the waters: Mike Harbaugh tries his luck at fishing

Tribune-Star/Jim Avelis



Prairie Creek Park

Haven for mushroom hunters and campers from the area

By Dave Delaney
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

Mushroom hunters and campers are already getting plenty of use out of Prairie Creek Park this young season.

"I'd hate to guess how many pounds of mushrooms have been taken out of here the last couple weeks," said park caretaker Jim Pierce, "probably 300 or 400."

Pierce said the 106-acre park in the southwest section of the county accepted its first camper of the season during the mid-February blizzard and that campers have been a familiar site there since mid-April.

The park — which opened in 1972 — has 42 modern camp sites. "We decided to make it a multi-purpose park similar to Fowler Park," explained Vigo County Park Superintendent Keith Ruble. There are modern restrooms for the campers and even hot showers.

A baseball diamond near the front of the park gets good use, said Ruble, and there are two tennis courts available. Over three miles of trails wander through the park's Miami Trail Nature Center. This woods is an old growth area, dominated by sugar maple trees, and is one of the

last remaining examples of the early forests of Vigo County.

There are two lakes in the park: one near the front, which is just over two acres in size and an 18.5-acre lake near the back. Persons fish both and also swim in the smaller one.

"Fishing is good," said Pierce. Ruble added that the Indiana Department of Natural Resource Division of Fisheries stocks the lake with large mouth bass, red-eared sunfish, channel cat and bluegill. Added Ruble: "Fishing is excellent on the back lake."

Ruble went on to say that the county raises small channel catfish each year. "They get up to 10 or 11 inches in the fall and then we release them in different parks."

An old log cabin made of huge square beams is used every February and March to boil sap into maple syrup.

"We probably make a thousand tap holes in trees each spring," said Ruble of the maple sugaring process. Students from around the county are bussed to the sugar shack to see the annual process. Ruble figures about 2,000 county school children witnessed the event this early spring.

The maple sugar is sold at the Courthouse. "We still have some left," Ruble said. "It makes a nice

gift."

Marie Brush and Geri Roach and their families have been camping at the park for a number of days already this spring. They're just two of many families with trailers at the park this season.

"You wouldn't believe all the people carrying bags of mushrooms out of here," said Brush, "it's unreal."

She said their families generally start their camping season at this park each year and end up there in the fall. In between, they stay at many other area camp grounds.

"It's always quiet here and everybody's friendly," she said. "We all walk around and visit with each other."

Roach said the park's shelters are popular spots for big picnics and reunions. "We had a family reunion at one a couple years ago," she said.

The ladies said two sets of campers have had their trailers at the park since March.

"The park always fills for holidays," said Pierce. He noted shelter reservations for weekends are about filled for the first part of the summer. For more information on this, Pierce said to contact the County Park Department at the Courthouse.



Cleaning mushrooms

Rick Johnson, Melba Johnson, John Campbell and Thelma Johnson prepare for a mushroom feast while camping in park in southwestern Vigo County.



Solitude

Fred, Freda and Heather Powers take a quiet boat ride to enjoy the outdoors.



Entrance to park

Vigo County Public Library

This sign welcomes visitors to Prairie Creek Park, which is part of Vigo County.

Many Festival Events

Prairie Creek Park Dedication Planned

Monday will be Park and Recreation Day at the second annual Banks of the Wabash Festival which opened Saturday at Fairbanks Park and will continue through Sunday, May 31.

Grand opening and dedication at 10 a.m. of the Prairie Creek Park in the southwest corner of Vigo County and continued work on the cabin raising at Fowler Park will be two of the special events for the day.

Among those present for the dedication will be William Hale from Eaton, a town near Muncie, who is Chief of the Miami Indian Tribes to whom the park will be dedicated.

+ + +

Keith Ruble, co-chairman with Pat Daugherty for the day's program, said Chief Mon-Gon-Zah will bring with him some

official Indian historical documents, wearing apparel and Indian artifacts.

Ruble said the land on which the park is located was once owned by the Miamis, as was most of Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Michigan.

Others expected to be present will be county officials, members of the Vigo County Park Board and the Prairie Creek Conservancy District. Larry Gibbs, representing U.S. Congressman John Myers (R-7th Dist.) also was expected to attend.

Ruble said conducted tours of the park will be offered between 11 a.m. and 12 noon and advised those planning to take

See FESTIVAL

On Page 2, Column 1

Scheduled For Today

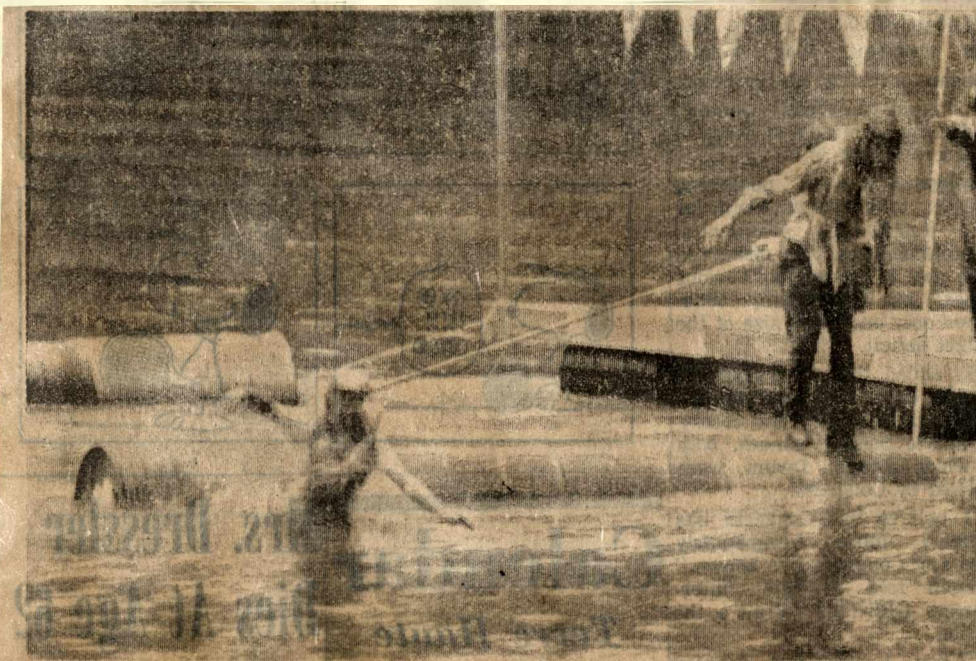
PRAIRIE CREEK PARK

Community Affairs File

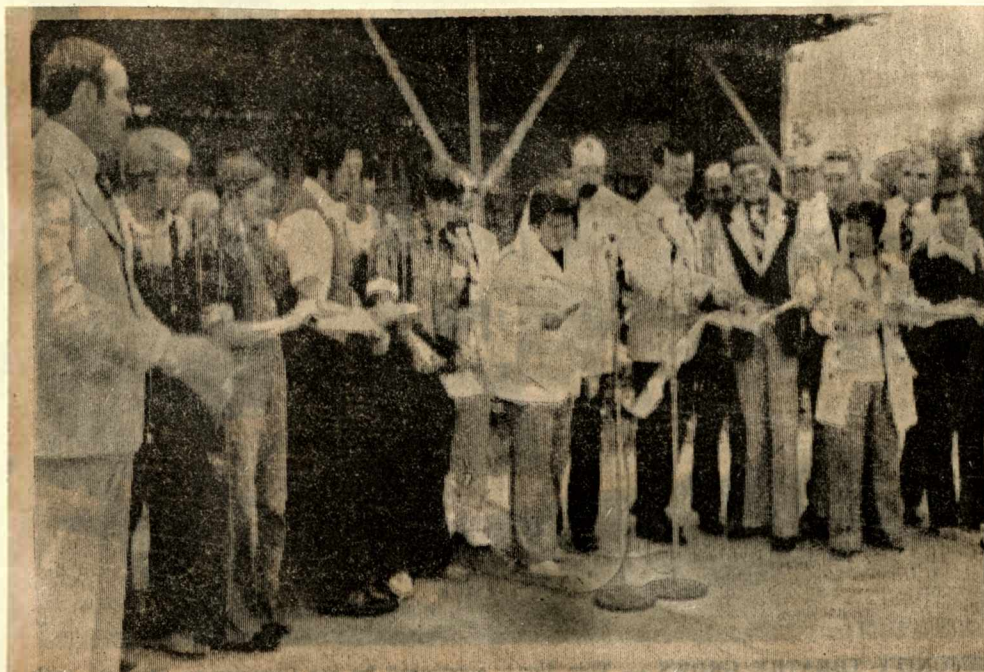
REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA



LOG ROLLING — Log rolling was one of several events conducted Sunday afternoon in the Wabash River at Fairbanks Park. The event was to be conducted Saturday, but was postponed due to rain. Other events Sunday included row boat contests, distance canoeing and an innertube race. (Photo by Kadel)



OPENING CEREMONY — Mrs. Gladys Phillips, center, along with other Banks-of-the-Wabash officials and special guests cut the ribbon Saturday to open the second annual festival. To Mrs. Phillips' left is Gene Vaughn, president of the local festival and Congressman John Myers. (Photo by Kadel)

Festival

Continued From Page 1
the walking tour to wear comfortable shoes.

+ + +

The cabin raising will begin at Fowler Park where a log cabin, now about one-third completed, will be worked on by Park Department employees.

The old fashioned school will be in session from 10 a.m. to noon at the Little Red School House at New Goshen and will be in charge of members of the Vigo County Retired Teachers Association.

Public viewing of the film showing many Terre Haute doctors in the 1920's and 1930's will begin on Monday afternoon, June 2 at 2 p.m., and continue each afternoon at 2 p.m. through Friday, June 6 in the Fairbanks Park Wabash Federal tent as part of the Banks-of-the-Wabash Festival "Old-Time Movies."

According to Ann Newman, Vigo County Library Film Librarian, this 16mm film is fragile and must be treated and inspected each time it is projected. "This limits the times the film can be shown to the public, so we hope many people who want to see this historic film will be able to do so during the Festival," she said.

The film was recently deposited in the Historical Collection of the Vigo County Public Library by Dr. Alexander W. Cavins. The film was taken by the late Dr. Charles Wyeth, who was in practice locally as a radiologist.

+ + +

Other events Monday include two film festivals and performances by members of Community Theater and the Happiness Bag Touring Company. A complete schedule of all events for Monday will be listed at the end of this article.

Two activities, postponed Saturday because of the day's steady downpour, were completed Sunday afternoon.

In the rolling competition for persons 18 years and over, James Jones took top honors, followed closely by Jerry Rutledge. In the 18 years and under group, Kevin Morris, Terre Haute North, and South's Sonny Underwood grabbed first places.

Morris also took first place in the row boat race for contestants under 18 years of age, while Calvin Rutledge, Jr. won the row boat race for the over 18-year old group, and Larry Wright grabbed second place.

+ + +

Sonny Underwood took another blue ribbon in the innertube race, capturing top honors in 13 minutes. Jess Wilkinson placed second.

The distance canoe race,

which began in Clinton and finished in Terre Haute, was won by Dick and Rick Ryan, in the over 18-year-old division. The duo won the event in two hours and six minutes. Second place went to Bob Heck and Frank Miklozek, Jr.; third place to John Garrard and Dave Erickson.

In the 18-year-old division, John Moore and David Michl, both from Terre Haute South, teamed to win the distance canoe event. Tim Supp, North, and John Hicks, South, combined for second place.

+ + +

This year the Junior Board is sponsoring a trophy for the high school which earns the most points in the under 18-year-old age group for river activities. Five points are awarded to first place finishers, three points for a second place, and one point for a third place.

Terre Haute North leads competition thus far with 14 points, followed by Terre Haute South with nine points.

Tuesday will be Farmer's Day, with "Farmer's on Parade" event at 11 a.m. and a display of old and new farm equipment at Fairbanks Park at 12 noon. A ham and bean dinner will be offered by 4-H leaders from 12 noon to 8 p.m.

Dr. John Marten, agricultural economist from Purdue University, will speak at 8 p.m. in the community tent about what resources will be required by farmers so that they can remain in the farming business, according to a report by Max Miller, extension agent for community development.

+ + +

Wednesday will be Senior Citizens' Day; Thursday will be Youth Day and Friday will be Community Progress Day. Last week-end of the Festival will feature on Saturday the Marathon-Marathon, Hovercraft rally, BOW Day at the circus at Hulman Civic-University Center and a Western Square Dance at the Montgomery Ward parking lot.

Sunday's program will feature the BOW Festival Antique Car Show from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Fairbanks Park. River events, youth church services and a Festival of Churches mass choir concert at 5 p.m.

Program Banks-of-the-Wabash Festival

Monday, June 2

Park and Recreation Day

10 A.M. — Grand Opening of Prairie Creek Park.

10 A.M. — Cabin Raising at Fowler Park.

10 A.M. to 12 noon—Old Fashioned School in Session at New Goshen Little Red School House.

11 A.M. — Guided tour of Prairie Creek Park.

1 P.M. to 5 P.M. — Film Festival at Wabash Federal Savings and Loan Tent, Fairbanks Park.

4 P.M. — Happiness Bag Touring Company, Fairbanks Park.

7 P.M. — Melodrama, "Unhand Me, Villain" Fairbanks Park.

Labor Film Festival

Central Labor Council Tent

7 P.M. — "Salt of the Earth."

8:30 P.M. — "Bullet Bargaining at Ludlow."

9:15 P.M. — "This Union Forse."

Entertainment at Bandshell

7 P.M. to 9 P.M.—Film Festival at Wabash Federal Savings and Loan Tent, Fairbanks Park.

5 P.M. to 7 P.M. — Bluegrass Posse and Art Monroe and Gina Jo.

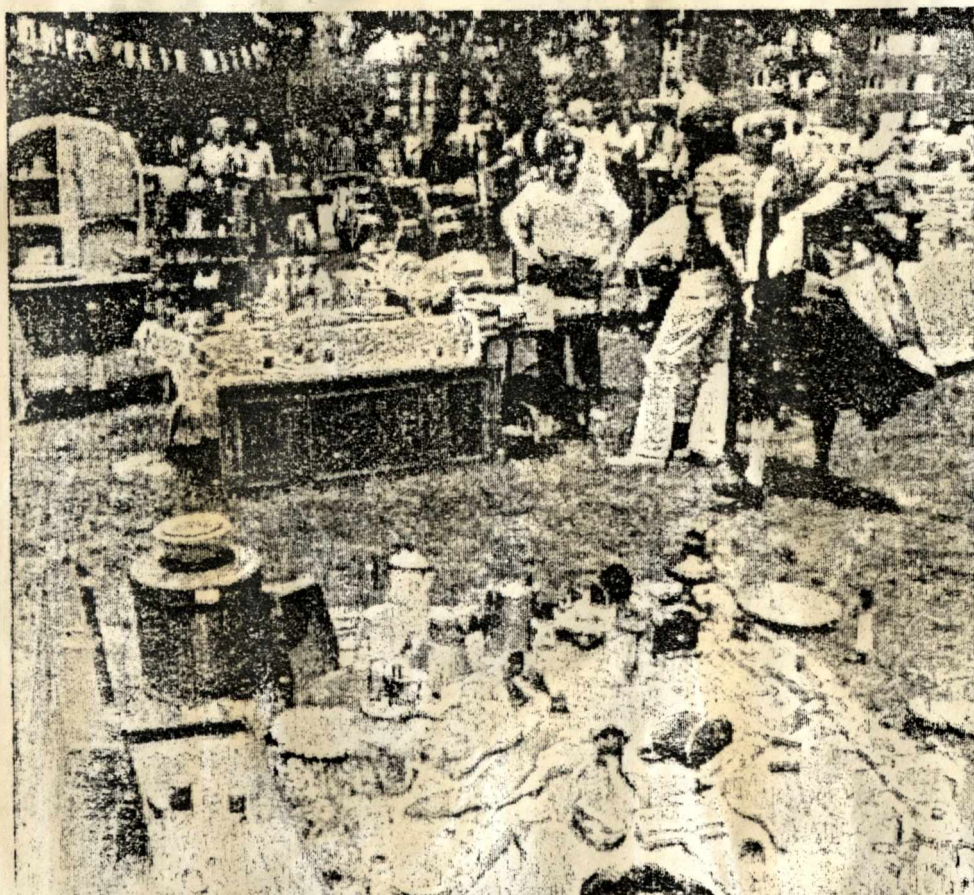
7 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. — Vigo County Choral Club.

7:30 P.M. to 9 P.M. — Marshall, M., City Band.

9 P.M. to 10 P.M. — Rebus (Rock)



COMMUNITY THEATRE GROWS — This float, sponsored by the Community Theatre, took part in Saturday's second annual Banks of the Wabash parade. The downtown parade, led by Grand Marshal Tony Hulman and honorary marshals Dr. John A. Logan and Dr. Alan C. Rankin, kicked off activities for the nine-day event. (Photo by Kadel)



SUNDAY FLEA MARKET — The Vigo County Historical Society sponsored a flea market Sunday on the Paul Dresser home grounds as a side attraction to the Banks of the Wabash Festival. Antiques, historical relics and all types of collector's items were available to the public. (Photo by Kadel)

PRAIRIE CREEK PARK

Target date for construction is expected to be early August, according to Ruble who said, "As soon as contractors take a look at our blueprints and bids are advertised and awarded, we'll be ready to go."

Max Miller County Extension Agent said Wednesday night, "The blueprints are already drawn up. We anticipated the money and now we'll be ready to go to work."

Included in the development of the Prairie Creek Park will be a unique "back-pack camp area" which Ruble says relates to camp areas out West.

"The only two ways you'll be able to get into this back-pack area will be by foot or boat. And what you take into this area, is what you'll bring out," Ruble commented.

He pointed out that the "back-pack area" will be located adjacent to a 20-acre watershed area which will be flooded this fall.

Development of a modern and creative playground will be one of the many highlights featured at the park. Ruble remarked that playground equipment to be used at the Prairie Creek Park was earlier displayed publicly at the courthouse.

"The playground equipment is the most modern and creative equipment on the market today and it is constructed with the child's safety in mind," said the county parks superintendent.

Other highlights at the park will include a two-mile "marked and tagged" trail which will have many of this area's natural plants and species identified by tag so that hikers can enjoy the natural history of the Wabash Valley region.

Fishing and possibly swimming will be available at the park along with two camping areas.

"We'll have two designated

camping areas. One for trailers and one for campers using

tents," said Ruble.

Tennis courts, two ball fields, and a playground will highlight the active recreation area, while

"passive area" will be developed so that a camper may simply enjoy the outdoors in the manner he sees fit.

"The passive area will let the

camper enjoy the natural outdoors and he may choose what he wants to do in this area at his own discretion," noted Ruble.

Funds will also be used to construct a road system to the park, erect a maintenance building, restrooms and

Grant Boosts Park Expansion

MAY 31 1973

Prairie Creek Park, a \$127,000, 100-acre project of the Vigo County Park & Recreation Department, has received federal matching funds grant approval, according to a report from Congressman John Myers (R-7th Dist.).

Funded federally through the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, U.S. Department of the Interior, the grant is for \$63,467.30, half the estimated cost, to be matched with state and local funds.

Supt. Keith Ruble of the county recreation department said:

"I'm quite pleased to receive

the grant and I think the area residents will enjoy the ideas we have in mind in developing this park," stated Keith Ruble, county parks superintendent.

Ruble emphasized that the federal grant was issued primarily from the result of efforts by the West Central Indiana Economic Development District staff, John Hanley, of area planning, conservationist Ned Pennington and a number of other organizations.

The funds will be used for the development of 29 campsites, 60 picnic sites, two picnic shelters, a multi-purpose playground area, as well as construction of a small pond.

necessary underground electrical wiring.

Application for the federal grant was originally made through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, but local authorities became aware of the recent "HUD freeze" and quickly reapplied for the grant through BOR.

"When we realized the HUD freeze was coming on, we applied with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. We were happy to hear Congressman Myers' announcement Wednesday, because we submitted our grant application one day before the BOR's deadline on federal grants," remarked WCIEDD staffer John Sheehan.



BLUEPRINTS AND PLANS—A new park is as carefully designed as an office building or a highway as this photo of the proposed Prairie Creek Park shows. Construction of the southern Vigo County park should begin by August, following announcement Wednesday of a Department of the Interior Bureau of Outdoor Recreation grant of \$63,467.30. The 100-acre park will include 29 campsites, picnic shelters, a multi-purpose playground area and some innovative concepts in play equipment and nature preserves. **Martin Photo.**

Prairie Creek Lake Project Hit By Report

T.H. Tribune 7-25-67

By JACK A. HUGHES
Tribune Staff Writer

"It won't hold water."

That was the substance of a report Tuesday concerning the site of a proposed million dollar lake and recreation spot in the Prairie Creek area.

Richard D. Norris, Vigo Park and Recreation Department superintendent, released information from a 35-page soil analysis obtained by the Park Board before committing funds to the project.

Norris noted that the Board has not made a final decision "either to cancel or continue the project." But, he added, "It is very unlikely that the Board will vote in the affirmative" in the face of the report by the American Testing and Engineering Corporation.

The proposal stemmed from a flood control project, the Prairie Creek Watershed, which appeared to offer an opportunity to expand the development for recreational purposes as well. Proponents anticipated an approximate 300-acre site about half of which would be under water, according to Norris.

Secured Soil Analysis

The plan, with federal funds expected both for the flood control and recreational features of the project, could still have required the expenditure of several hundred thousand dollars from local appropriations, Norris reported. Before undertaking that size a project, he said, the Board commissioned the soil

Continued On Page 4, Col. 5

analysis at a cost of some \$1,500.

Norris quoted from the testing firm's report: "Based on the results of the field and laboratory tests, the soils in the area of the proposed reservoir appear to be too permeable to maintain the water level at the proposed level of 1,528. The surface soils along the valley walls at ground elevations above 515 are sandy and silty in texture with a very small per cent of clay and, based on the results of field permeability tests, the flow of water beneath the dam would probably be too great to maintain the necessary water surface elevation."

The report went on to acknowledge that success would depend on "... the amount of inflow that can be expected, especially during dry summer months ... probably ... quite low."

The testing firm's analysis also took note of the fact that there was little hope that further inquiry would result in a more favorable report.

In his news release, Norris stated, "As indicated, the report is not favorable. However, at this point no final decision has been made to either cancel or to continue the project by the Park and Recreation Board. We seek to inform you and keep you abreast of the proceedings of the Prairie Creek Watershed Project."

He stressed that the new de-

velopment in no way affects the conservancy and flood control aspects of the existing watershed project. He also reported that information from the analysis suggested that the flood control project itself may result in a part-time lake of some 80 acres.

But whether it can become a permanent recreation facility, and perhaps even expanded at a later date, "only time will tell."

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

PRAIRIE CREEK PARK

Community Affairs File
**Park Board
To Open
New Park**

Park and Recreation (Vigo)
Vigo County's new Prairie Creek Park will open officially on Monday, June 2, with flag raising at 10 a.m. by the Fort Minglewood Long Rifle Association.

County Park and Recreation Supt. Keith Ruble, members of the staff and the County Park Board will be on hand to greet visitors and conduct tours of the 100-acre facility, which is named after the little stream that flows in the southwestern section of Vigo County.

An Indian chief will be among the dignitaries attending the grand opening ceremonies, Ruble said. The special guest, Chief Mongonzah, of the Miami Nation, has been successful in his efforts to obtain several million dollars for the Miami Nation from old land treaties.

Prairie Creek Park has been under construction for the past several years. It offers Vigo County residents an excellent outdoor playground.

Camping is available during the season, at a \$3 fee. All camping sites have electricity. There are approximately 50 picnic tables, and ovens are available at picnic sites.

The two large shelter houses, Maple and Persimmon, can each accommodate 150 people. Each shelter has electrical outlets and may be used by visitors.

Reservations for the shelters may be made with the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department. A \$10 deposit is required.

Fishing will be available later when the fish are of adequate size. The lake and pond have recently been stocked. A boat ramp is provided for boaters and fishermen. The use of electric motors only is requested.

Trails for hiking through different types of forest and open areas have been laid out and are marked for directions and general information.

The Miami Nature Area features a unique old growth of maple forest, and is considered the best old growth stand of sugar maple in Vigo County.

The Multi-purpose Play Area will provide tennis, basketball, ice skating and baseball. Two ball fields are located at Prairie Creek Park and the Prairie Creek Youth Association plays the home games at the new park.

The new Adventure Playground offers children the challenges and fascinations they need, and has been set up with the child's interest in mind.

There is no admission charge to the park. The opening day ceremonies will tie into the schedule of the Banks of the Wabash Festival, which runs from May 31 through June 8. Appropriately, Monday, June 2 is Park and Recreation Day.

Community Affairs File

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

PRAIRIE
CREEK
PARK

PRAIRIE CREEK PARK

Community Affairs File

County Park Board to Buy 100 Acres Land

Park (T.H.)

David Beres, superintendent of the Vigo County Park Department, said Wednesday that the park and recreation board at its monthly meeting Monday agreed to purchase 100 acres of land in Prairie Creek Township.

The land would be developed into a multi-purpose park with an 18-acre lake, using matching funds from the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. It will be the third recreation area developed in the southern township.

Beres declined to name the present owner of the land since strict procedures must be followed before purchase is complete. He expects, however, that actual work might begin sometime in the late summer.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Prairie Creek Park

Community Affairs File
TUESDAY, JULY 11, 1972
JUL 11 1972
HAUTE, IND.

Prairie Creek Park (Vigo Co)



CREATING A NEW PARK—Officials of the Vigo County Park Department and the Prairie Creek-Vigo Conservancy District met Monday to exchange papers— a check for \$35,000 and the deed to 100 acres in Prairie Creek Township. The site will become a multi-purpose park featuring a 20-acre lake, the first of four proposed parks in each corner of the county. Signing the deed was Lloyd B. Deutsch, chairman of the conservancy district, while witnesses were (from the left) Harvey D. Wuks, district financial secretary; Max G. Miller, president of the park board; Burch Harlan, district secretary; James A. Ball, attorney for the district, and William J. Maher, county park board attorney.

Community Affairs File

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

County Board

1972
Buys 100-Acre

Park Site

By BARBARA L. BRUGNAUX
Tribune Staff Writer

Southwest Vigo County will be the site of the newest county-owned park and recreation facility, following deed ceremonies Monday morning.

Participating in the ceremony were the president of the county park board, Max Miller, and park board attorney William H. Maher, who handed a check for \$35,000 to representatives of the Prairie Creek-Vigo Conservancy District, Lloyd Deutsch and attorney James Ball.

The 100-acre site is located one mile north of Ind. 246 and 1½ miles east of Ind. 63 in Prairie Creek Township. Park Superintendent David V. Beres describes the site as heavily wooded and rolling terrain, ideal for hiking, camping and sports.

"The emphasis at the Prairie Creek park will be on recreation," Beres stressed. "Full development of the area will include picknicking, camping, ball diamonds, basketball and tennis courts, playground equipment, bridle paths and hiking

Continued On Page 2, Col. 3.

Park Site

1972
Continued From Page One.

trails in addition to the fishing and swimming attractions provided in an 18 to 20-acre lake."

The lake is a flood-control project of the Prairie Creek Conservancy District. Presence of the lake was a factor in approval of the park proposal by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

The state bureau of outdoor recreation provided \$13,510 in cost-sharing for the acquisition, with the remainder coming from the park department non-reverting capital fund.

"We are currently applying for other funds to aid in development of the park," Beres noted. "Plans call for the area to be open next summer since not that much construction will be necessary; however, full development of the Prairie Creek site is expected to span several years."

In accepting the deed, board president Miller noted that the acquisition is the first step toward a park department goal of one park in each corner of the county.

The Prairie Creek Park has been in the planning for about five years," Miller said, "and is the first of several this department would like to operate for the benefit of Vigo County citizens. This is a goal that has been approved as part of the recently completed five-year master plan, and a necessary development in order to bring this county up to national standards for recreational facilities."

PRAIRIE CREEK

PRAIRIE CREEK PARK

REFERENCE

DO NOT CIRCULATE



Welcome to Prairie Creek Park, named after the little town of Prairie Creek in the southwestern section of Vigo County. 100 acres of beautiful rolling topography offering Vigo County residents an excellent outdoor playground.

PICNICKING - There are approximately 50 picnic tables to accommodate picnickers. Ovens are available at some of the sites. PLEASE BUILD FIRES IN GROUND FIRE PLACE AREAS.

CAMPING - Camping is available on year-round basis. Fees are charged from April to September. Charges are: \$1.00 a nite per unit in the primitive area; \$2.00 a nite per unit with electricity.

SHELTER HOUSE - There are 3 large shelter houses with accommodations for 150 people at each shelter. Electric outlets and a fireplace may be used by visitors. For reservations, contact the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department office. A deposit fee of \$10.00 is required. This is refundable.

BOATING AND FISHING - A boat ramp is provided for boaters and fishermen. The use of electric motors only is requested. Good Fishing!

HIKING - Trails for hiking through different types of forest and open areas are provided and are adequately marked for directions and general information.

MULTIPURPOSE PLAY AREA - The multi-purpose play area will provide tennis, basketball and other small play apparatus.

ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND - Set up with the child's interest in mind. Adventure playground offers the child the challenges and fascinations that are vitally needed for a growing child's education.

*** PLEASE NOTE: Prairie Creek is undeveloped at present. Development will begin by mid 1973.

Park (Vigo)
**Construction
Of New Vigo
Park to Start**

By BARBARA BRUGHAUX
Tribune Staff Writer

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the county's second all-purpose park are tentatively scheduled for next week, following the awarding of a \$123,432.65 construction contract Wednesday.

The Vigo County Park and Recreation Board Wednesday afternoon awarded the contract for construction of a pond, roads and buildings at the Prairie Creek Park site to Haley Brothers Construction Corp.

Only three bids were subjected for the project, with two of them dealing with pond construction alone. Park Supt. Keith Ruble said the park board felt that the low of Trousdale Excavating for \$3,849 was not the best, while they were advised not to accept the bid of Donald Stephens Excavating for \$5,721.80 because of potential legal complications resulting from the lack of a signature on the bid.

The successful bid was for \$32,432.65 for roads and \$70,944 for buildings and pond construction.

The 108-acre site in Prairie Creek Township was purchased last year from the Prairie Creek Conservancy District at a cost of \$35,000. A Bureau of Outdoor Recreation grant of \$63,400, matched by park department non-reverting capital funds, will finance the park's development.

No definite date has been set for the groundbreaking, although Ruble says Tuesday is a likely date. County officials and park board members will be invited.

When county residents visit the park, to be completed by next summer pending good weather, they'll be greeted by a variety of recreational outlets.

Although swimming will probably not be offered, fishing, boating, hiking along nature trails, trailer and primitive camping and, of course, picnicking will be available.

In addition, a baseball diamond already on the site will be available to the public on a reservation basis with the Prairie Creek Youth Association league games having first priority, Ruble noted.

Also already on the property is a tree nursery with 400 poplar trees planted. The nursery is a

particular Ruble project, aimed at supplying trees for other county parks and land.

Bidding on the construction of the Prairie Creek Park marked the first time that the county park department has not completed its own work on a park. Outside construction was necessary because of the scope of the project. Other contracts are still to be advertised, Ruble said, on water lines, a multi-purpose court and playground equipment.

PRAIRIE CREEK PARK

Work Under Way On New Vigo Park

By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

Groundbreaking ceremonies for Vigo County's new Prairie Creek Park took place Tuesday morning, with Circuit Court Judge C. Joseph Anderson and several other county officials joining members of the county park board and Supt. Keith Ruble in turning the first ceremonial shovels of earth.

Haley Brothers Construction Corp. was awarded the \$123,432.65 contract for the work, which includes construction of a pond, roads and buildings. The successful bid was \$52,488.65 for roads and \$70,944 for buildings and pond construction.

The 108-acre site in Prairie Creek Township was purchased last year from the Prairie Creek Conservancy District at a cost of \$35,000. A Bureau of Outdoor Recreation grant of \$63,400, matched by park department non-reverting capital funds, will finance the development of Vigo County's second all-purpose park.

The park is expected to be completed by next summer, weather permitting. Fishing, boating, hiking along nature trails, primitive camping and picnicking will be available. Swimming will probably not be

offered, according to Supt. Ruble.

A baseball diamond already on the site will be available to the public on a reservation basis with the Prairie Creek Youth Association league games having first priority.

A tree nursery is also already on the county property, with 400 poplar trees planted. The nursery project will supply trees for other county parks and land.

Ruble noted that this was the first time that Vigo County has not completed its own work on a park. Outside construction was necessary because of the scope of the project. Other bids will be advertised later for water lines, a multi-purpose court and playground equipment.

Members of the county park board are Max G. Miller, president; Susan McCarthy, John Etling, Fox Burns, Boyd Schepfer and Everett Spence.



GROUNDBREAKING AT PRAIRIE CREEK PARK From left are Max Miller, president of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board; Hank Haley of Haley Brothers Construction Corp., the general contractor; Vigo Circuit Court judge C. Joseph Anderson; county councilman Don Myers; park board member Susan McCarthy and county commissioner Frank Kaperak. A pond, roads and buildings will be constructed on the 108-acre site in Prairie Creek Township. This will be Vigo County's second all-purpose park. Work is expected to be completed by next summer.

House of Photography Photo

Prairie Creek Park

8 MAR 8 1974

Agreement Reached

Parks and Recreation / Vigo Co.
Progress on Vigo County's second all-purpose park in Prairie Creek Township continues to move forward and an agreement on its operation has been reached.

Lloyd B. Deutsch, chairman of the Prairie Creek-Vigo Conservancy District, and Max G. Miller, president of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners, have signed a memorandum of agreement after six months of discussion on the document.

Under the agreement, it will be the mutual responsibility of both organizations to promote public interest and support comprehensive plans for the orderly use and development of natural resources in the area.

The conservancy district comprises some 19,000 acres in southwestern Vigo County. The district has completed three flood-control structures including a 30-acre lake which was completed in September 1973.

+ + +

The park board and district will also work together to determine effective ways to use and develop natural resources to achieve maximum benefits to the community and meet periodically to discuss mutual problems and develop a plan to meet the needs of residents within the district boundaries.

Representatives of the district and park officials will jointly

perform an annual inspection of the dam, emergency spillway and outlet area of the lake to determine needed maintenance. They will also jointly review usage of the park to determine any adverse conditions which are detrimental to the purpose of the lake.

The memorandum stipulates that the board will inform the district of planning and work with the district to develop a program of effective co-operation.

+ + +

It will be the responsibility of the park department also to:

—Police refuse in and around the lake resulting from park usage.

—Develop the park with sediment-control measures and stabilizations of the area as set forth in a Resource conservation Plan developed with the assistance of the Vigo County Soil and Water Conservation District.

—Submit all proposed construction plans within the district to district officials for their review.

The conservancy district will be responsible to:

Inform the park board of future plans of the district to develop a program of effective co-operation and any proposed changes or amendments to the district's plan.

—Maintain the dam, emergency spillway and outlet area with assistance of the park department.

—Review all construction plans for future developments to safeguard against severe sediment damage or any other measure which would adversely affect the lake.

—Submit to the park board all major construction plans involving the district's works of improvement for review by the board.

+ + +

Deutsch noted that the defined purposes of the two bodies prevention, and control measures, control erosion, improve drainage and develop recreation. The district, he said, has or will develop a plan to systematically provide these benefits to residents of the watershed area.

The 100-acre Prairie Creek County Park site was purchased complement each other. The park board was set up to develop land and facilities for recreational purposes, while the conservancy district was

174. 8 MAR 8 1974
established to carry out flood for \$35,000 from the conservancy district in July 1972. Groundbreaking was conducted in August 1973 after the board awarded a \$123,000-construction contract to Haley Bros. Construction Corp. for development of the park.
The park is expected to be completed this year but no date has been set for the opening.

Prairie Creek

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

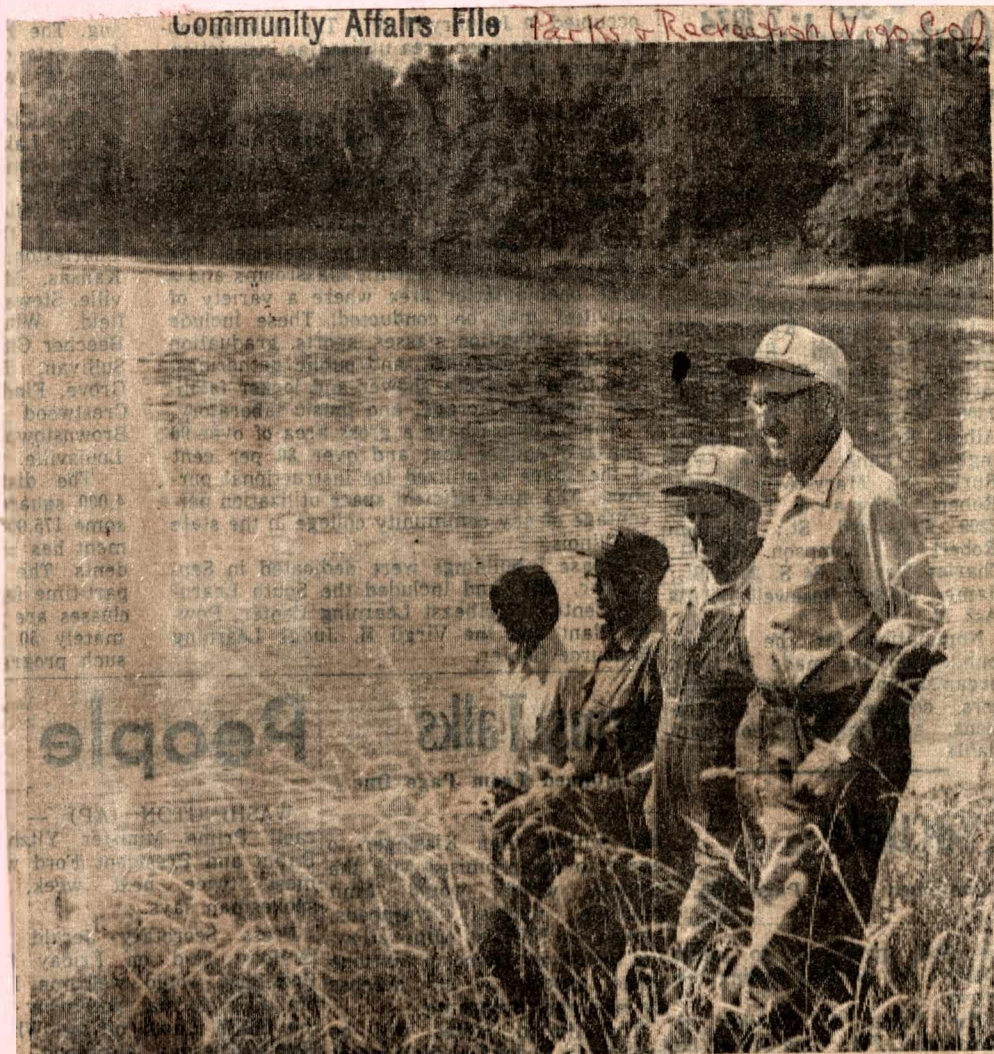
Community Affairs File
**State Gets
Check for
Prairie Creek**
AUG 24 1974

The State of Indiana has received a check from the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in the amount of \$26,992 for the Prairie Creek Park. It was announced Friday by Joseph D. Cloud, director of the Department of Natural Resources.

The check, which will be sent to the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board, represents part reimbursement for the construction of the picnic shelters, latrines, comfort station and maintenance shop in the park.

The project is receiving financial assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund which provides 50 per cent of the cost for acquisition of lands and waters and the development of public outdoor recreation sites and facilities. This federal assistance program is administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. In addition to obligating money to state projects, the department also makes funds available to city and county park and recreation boards.

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE



ANNUAL INSPECTION of the dam that is Prairie Creek Watershed Structure No. 3 at the site of the future Prairie Creek Park was conducted Friday by members of the Prairie Creek Conservancy District and of the Vigo County Park & Recreation Department. Inspectors included (from the left) Keith Ruble, county park department superintendent; Delbert Kester and Forrest Johnson, members of the conservancy district board; and Loyd Deutsch, chairman of that body. Initiated for flood control, the 15-acre lake created by the structure will be the site of the 100-acre Prairie Creek County Park slated to open next year.

SEP 7 1974

House of Photography.

Group Named Community Affairs File To Consider Park Proposal

DEC 17 1974

A committee was appointed Monday night following a meeting of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board to investigate the possibility of acquiring from three to five acres in the Prairieton area for a park.

Named were Chet Burkeyble, assistant park superintendent; Bill Morris, Prairieton Township trustee; Douglas Hughes and Kim Keeney. (See related photo on page 18).

Consensus was that the county department would prefer to own rather than lease or rent a site for a small park. Superintendent Keith Ruble said that residents of the area would like to have a playground for small children, as well as tennis courts.

About 20 persons attended the regular monthly meeting of the Park Board, which was held in Prairieton.

Also discussed were fees and charges at Fowler Park, tabled until the Jan. 27 meeting of the board at the Red Cross Building.

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File
Park Project
APR 28 1975
Bids Opened

Park & Recreation (Vigo)

Bids were opened and taken under advisement Monday in the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department for a multi-purpose court to be constructed at Prairie Creek Park, a new country park slated for opening this season.

Low bidder of the three firms submitting bids, all within \$100 of one another, was Haley Bros. Construction Co. at \$17,900. The other bids were \$17,947 from the Dixie-Craft Development

Co. and \$17,999.99 from Don Stephens Excavating.

County Park Superintendent Keith Ruble said the contract will be let within a few days and that completion of the hard-surface playing court—111 feet by 121 feet for tennis, basketball, volleyball, ice skating and other activities—is scheduled for not later than June 1.

Prairie Creek Park (100 acres with a 20-acre lake) is located about a mile north of Prairie Creek and a mile-and-a-half east of Ind. 63 on the Quinn Rd. and will observe its grand opening on June 2.

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Watershed, Park Inspection Set

Prairie Creek in Limelight

Community Affairs File

SEP 5 1974

By COLLEEN BLACKETER

Tribune Staff Writer

A joint inspection of the Prairie Creek Watershed Structure No. 3 and the Prairie Creek Park is scheduled for Friday with the Prairie Creek Conservancy District and the County Park and Recreation officials.

The Conservancy District and the Park Board have worked together to develop the 15-acre lake in southeast Vigo County, intended only for flood control, into a recreation area for the local community.

Both organizations share the mutual responsibility to jointly perform an annual inspection

of the lake to determine any adverse conditions which are detrimental to the purpose of the lake, according to Ned Pennington, district conservacionist and technical adviser to the Conservation District.

The main problem with the park on the lake could be the obstruction of the primary overflow, Pennington said. This could occur by the accumulation of trash and litter or by the deliberate blockage of the overflow area. He said deliberate blockage would probably be an attempt to raise the level of the lake.

The Park Board is to be responsible for the trash. If the

overflow is plugged, the park grounds could become flooded by the backed up waters.

The Conservancy District also is worried about erosion from the construction of the park grounds. The erosion could start to fill in the lake. Pennington said the Park Board has taken substantial measures to prevent this.

The 100-acre Prairie Creek County Park site and the flood control reservoir compliment each other. The Park Board was set up to develop facilities for recreational purposes while the Conservancy District was established to carry out flood prevention and control within the

19,000-acre Prairie Creek Watershed.

The lake only has been used for flood protection so far. The park is not open yet.

Keith Ruble of the County Park and Recreation Department said the park will be open next spring. The park was scheduled to open this summer, but due to the adverse weather conditions this year, the opening was delayed. Ruble said the work is nearly done. Conservation work is the main project now.

The park will include picnic shelters, outside picnic areas, restrooms, two baseball fields.

Continued On Page 17, Col. 1.

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

over

T SEP 5 1974

Prairie Creek

Continued From Page One.

a tennis court, a camping area, a boat dock, trails and a nature area.

The nature area will include trails with descriptions of trees and plants along the way. A guide may be available to explain the area to groups upon request, Ruble said.

A swimming area may be developed at the park. Ruble said this depended upon the condition of the water in the lake.

"The lake will provide excellent recreational opportunities in the way of row-boating, fishing and nature study," Pennington said. "The lake will also provide excellent wildlife habitat, especially to migratory waterfowl, shore birds and aquatic animals such as muskrats and mink."

Pennington said the "biggest regret" now is that Prairie Creek Watershed Structure No. 1 was not used for a recreational facility. The 90-acre lake was designed as a multi-purpose lake to be used for both flood control and recreation.

The multi-purpose lake would be large enough for power boats and water skiing, Pennington said.

The Park Board could not buy land on Structure No. 1 or Structure No. 2, a 60-acre lake,

so the park has been developed on the smaller lake.

The Prairie Creek Watershed Project was started in the 1950's. Structure No. 1 was completed in 1967. Structure No. 2 was completed in 1970 and No. 3 was finished in 1973.

The Prairie Creek Conservancy District was formed in 1964 as a regulatory agency over the project.

The Conservation District has the right to levy taxes on the surrounding area. The taxes are decided individually according to the benefits received from the Watershed Structure. Money from local taxes and the federal government financed the building of the lakes.

The total cost of the installation of the Watershed Structures was \$367,101. According to Pennington, "The lakes have already gone a considerable way toward paying for themselves."

On July 20, 1973, Vigo County had flooding. Damages south of the lake estimated at \$100,000 were prevented to crops, county roads, bridges and homes because of the flood control lakes. Considerable damage occurred above the lakes.

The cost to benefit ratio of the project is one to 1.4, according to Pennington. For every \$1 spent on the lakes, \$1.40 has been saved through flood control. The total average cost of the lakes annually is \$38,243.

The total average benefits of the lakes annually are \$52,067.

Pennington said other bene-

fits have resulted. The value of property in the area has increased. The impact of the recreation facilities could generate more money in the area also.

The three lakes protect 2,000 acres. Flooding had occurred before in the Prairie Creek area due to the decreased Creek area due to the decreased channel in the creek created by the sedimentation of land from erosion.

The land above the lakes was treated before the installation of the project to prevent the sediment from forming in the lakes due to erosion.

Pennington has worked with local landowners to develop permanent conservation practices for some of the watershed areas.

Grass waterways have been used on 24 acres of the area. These waterways prevent soil from eroding with the running water.

Drop structures have been installed by using tiles and drainage devices to drop water from one level to another to prevent erosion. These structures have been used in 22 areas.

Diversion practices have been used on 8,120 acres. The use of diversion controls water on a stable grade. For instance, water is diverted to go around a hill instead of down the hill where more land would erode.

Farm ponds have been built in 49 places.

Pennington also worked with

farmers with agronomical practices.

He helped farms to create minimum tillage on 9,374 acres.

Crop residue management is being utilized on 7,156 acres.

Pasture management is being utilized on 666 acres.

Forty-six acres of trees have been planted.

Forest management has been developed in 110 acres also. This is done for optimum return on the trees as a crop.

Wildlife habitats have been developed on 514 acres by the landowners. The Conservancy District has set aside 65 acres as a wildlife nature area.

Of the 19,000 acres in the watershed district, Pennington said 17,000 acres are considered to be treated adequately with conservation practices.

Parks &
Recreation
(last page)

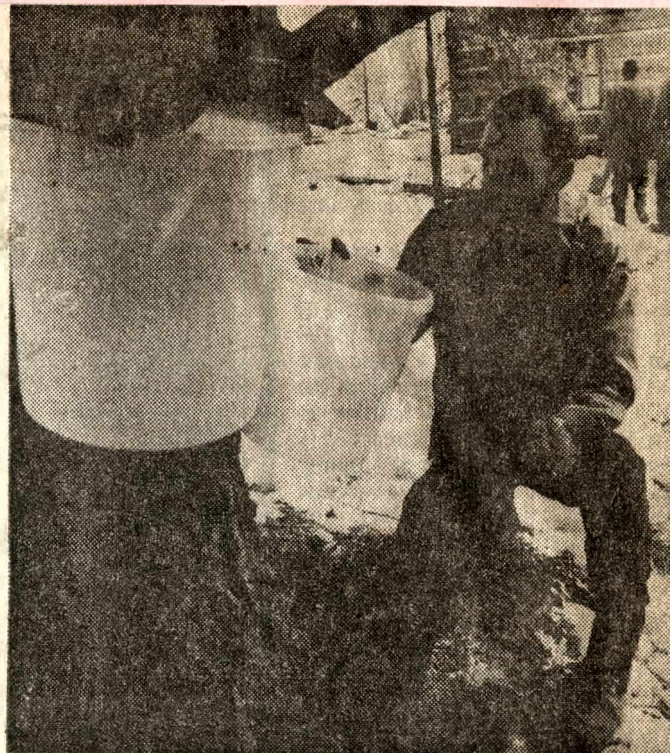
Community Affairs File

Got a sweet tooth?

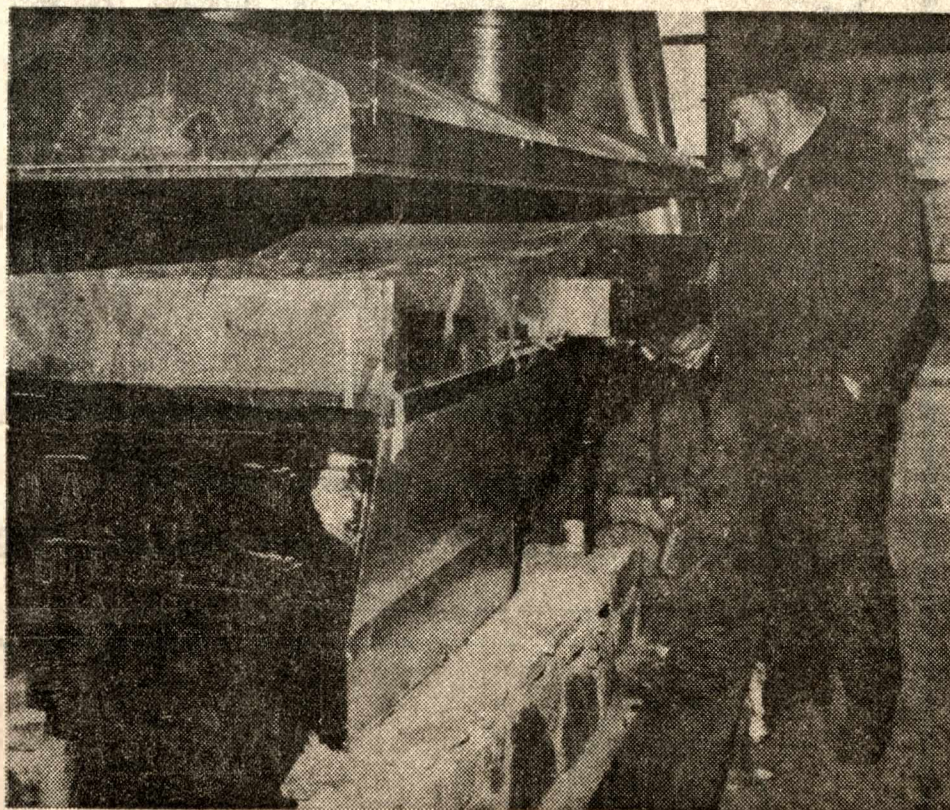
Try maple syrup

MAR 15 1972

**A pioneer treat is in store
for Prairie Creek Park visitors
The maple syrup camp is ready
to operate — a day awaited by
the park department**



FILL 'ER UP — Earl Slavens, employed by the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department, checks the flow of sugar water from the trees at Prairie Creek Park. Some syrup is being made this week and is available in limited quantities. The sap didn't flow as freely as Park Superintendent Keith Ruble had hoped, for the Park Department's first Maple Festival this spring. Persons wishing to visit the syrup operation should check with the Park Department office later this week to find out when the next batch will be made — and that depends on Mother Nature.



ADJUSTING THE EVAPORATOR — Rance Clawson has numerous duties with the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department. This year he's learned a new skill — how to make maple syrup. Rance is shown making an adjustment to the big evaporator in which maple sugar water is boiled down. The weather didn't cooperate very well this year in the county park department's project at Prairie Creek Park, but some sap is flowing and some syrup is being made.



FINISHING TOUCHES — The Vigo County Park and Recreation Department puts finishing touches on its "new" log cabin at Prairie Creek Park that houses the maple syrup-making operation. Steve Fonner is shown here finishing the chimney. A stand of maple trees nearby would have provided lots more sugar water if weather conditions had been ideal. The operation is proceeding this week, though at reduced capacity. Visitors are welcome to visit the park and observe the syrup making.

House of Photography

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File
Prairie Creek
Soil Conservation, Vigo
Conservancy
also T. MAR 18 1973
District Wins

Parks + Rec - Vigo
The Indiana Association of Conservancy Districts in Indianapolis recently honored the Prairie Creek-Vigo Conservancy District as the outstanding conservancy district in the state.

Lloyd Deutsch, Farmersburg, was honored for his years of service and also received a plaque. Deutsch, chairman of the original steering committee organized in 1956, is now serving his 10th year as a state director on the board.

The district, authorized Aug. 16, 1964, in the southwestern part of Vigo County, was cited for a significant and progressive land application program. The program is conducted with the technical assistance from the Soil Conservation Service.

Deutsch noted that a memorandum of understanding between the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board and the Conservancy District was signed last March for a plan of recreational development and land use needs. These will include a new county park to open this Spring which will provide boating, camping, hiking, field sports and picnic facilities.

An important factor in the award selection was the District's purchase of a 65-acre tract for a unique, wildlife area to be maintained as a permanent wildlife habitat area and wetland.

The District also was cited for its "outstanding job on annual maintenance needs of the completed structures to date."

"We are in the process of getting plans for the channel through five and one-half miles of Prairie Creek," Deutsch said, "and it looks as though by November the board will be in a position to let the contracts for cleaning the channel."

He emphasized that these plans had to be cleared with environmental, forestry and wild life conservations agencies.

The citation noted also that during a severe rain storm in 1973, an estimated \$100,000 damage was prevented to crops, roads and bridges as a result of two completed flood control structures.

The District is "an excellent example of a local project helping to solve local problems of the local people, according to the citation.

Deutsch, who was elected chairman of the district after the local board was appointed by the late Judge H. Ralph Johnston, has been re-elected subsequently and served as chairman since that time.

The present board members also were on the original steering committee. They are Forrest Johnson, RR 23, vice chairman; Burch Harlan, RR 22, secretary; Clebert Kester, Prairie Creek, and H. Dean Weeks, RR 23, financial clerk. Leon Francis Davis, Prairie Creek, is the contracting officer.

Parks + Recreation
(Vigo Co)

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File
Vigo County Public Library

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

Park & Recreation (Vigo Co.)

Something New Planned At Prairie Creek Park

By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

Something new and different in this part of the country is coming to Vigo County's new Prairie Creek Park . . . a multi-purpose concrete court that can be used year-round in a variety of ways.

Keith Ruble, Vigo County Park and Recreation Superintendent, hopes that bidding will be brisk on the project and that construction can begin this spring. Bids are to be awarded in early April.

The court will be 121 by 111 feet, with a six-inch curb, and slotted openings for drainage, backed by sandbags.

"We're staying with white concrete; colors absorb heat," Ruble explained.

After inspecting several

multi-purpose courts in the Chicago area, Ruble, assistant superintendent Chet Burkeyble and several knowledgeable individuals here got together over a drawing board and worked out their own design, using their own ideas and features they observed. Thus the specifications were arrived at.

The court can be used for basketball, tennis, other deck games, . . . and for ice skating. "Most areas in Vigo County are unsafe for ice skating," Ruble noted, "unless we have a long, severely cold winter. On this court, we'll use a spraying system to get a good ice surface from three to four inches thick during coldest weather . . . we'll do it layer by layer."

Plans call for four basketball goals to be installed, with at least one scaled to 8½ to 9 feet,

instead of the regulation 10-feet, especially for smaller kids to enjoy.

"The County Park Board did not think that the wasted concrete for tennis alone justified spending the money; with a larger area that can be used year-round for many outdoor recreational activities, we're all enthusiastic about this project," Ruble added.

The concrete surface will require little maintenance, the park superintendent noted.

"We'll see how this plan for the multi-purpose court works. If modifications appear desirable, then we'll use them in the next one," Ruble said.

The adventure playground at Fowler Park was a similar "first," and a second one has been included at the new Prairie Creek Park.

Vigo County Plans Maple Camp

By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

Vigo County may have its first maple camp next spring, according to County Park and Recreation Superintendent Keith Ruble. He's found the perfect place—Prairie Creek Park—and it's a natural.

And he's found at least 338 maple trees in the park, which could give about 600 taps if the weather is right.

"You can get a quart of finished syrup per tap in a good season," Ruble said, "and 1977 was a very good season."

Ruble hastens to add that the county park system isn't planning to go into the maple syrup business in a big way, just break even. The project, which has the unanimous endorsement of the County Park Board, will benefit everybody, Ruble thinks.

As an educational tool, the maple camp will give school children and adults an understanding and appreciation of (maybe even participation in)

the 300-year-old process of obtaining natural sweetening from maple trees.

Plans call for a small log cabin to house the evaporator and other equipment for syrup making to be placed on sloping ground near a stand of natural uncut maples across from the maintenance building. Unfortunately, a cabin believed to date back to 1816 that had been donated to the Park Department for this purpose was the target of arsonists last week. It was to have been moved to the park this spring from its location near the Honey Creek School.

At any rate, Ruble is striving for authenticity in the maple camp, and also plans to fire the evaporator with wood. If possible, the entire operation will be designed so that park visitors can actually participate in the maple syrup making process, the superintendent said.

Ruble reports excellent cooperation from Parke County maple syrup entrepreneurs Charlie Felkner and Archie

Foxworthy in his efforts to set up the first maple camp in Vigo County. Foxworthy is the only "wood burning producer" in Parke County, Ruble noted.

Where do you buy equipment to start up a new "old" process? Ruble, assistant superintendent Chet Burkeybyle and Park Board president Max Miller journeyed up to Mason, Mich., near Lansing, recently, to a supply house. Since then, they've been pouring over catalogs and making lists of what they'll need and how much it will cost.

If all goes well, the advance planning and preparation now will permit a new early spring park activity next year. Ruble's expertise has been developed during his past four years of

experience with his "cottage" industry, using maple sap from 27 trees on his own and a neighbor's property.

His evaporator is fashioned from a 55-gallon drum about 10 inches high, placed over an open fire. He uses a "regular old milk filter" and, then wife Susie finishes up on a stove in their house using a hygrometer to make sure it's "finished." Susie Ruble also handles the "packaging" chores.

Eventually Ruble hopes to build a log building for his maple syrup operation at home, but that won't be until after he's finished his log cabin.

The Indians were the first to use maple sap for sweetening, Ruble remarked, and that may provide ideas to Vigo County

school children (possibly fourth graders) who will be asked to submit a name for the sugar camp at Prairie Creek Park. The winner is to receive a gallon of real Vigo County maple syrup. Details of the contest are to be worked out. Fourth graders are required to take a unit on Indiana history and the maple syrup part fits in nicely, as does the Pioneer Village at Fowler Park, which is also a part of the county park system.

A film strip is also being prepared for use at the park for classes and other groups. It will depict arts and crafts of pioneer days. After the film, visitors will then see the log cabins and their contents in the little village in a new perspective.

TS APR 10 1977

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE

DO NOT CIRCULATE

County offers educational tours of maple syrup making process

Parks + Recreation (Vigo Co)

FEB 21 1979

By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

Free educational tours on the old fashioned process of making maple syrup will be available for the next few weeks, according to Vigo County Park and Recreation Superintendent Keith Ruble.

Vigo County is in the midst of preparations for its second annual maple syrup operation at Prairie Creek Park. If weather conditions are favorable, the tours may be scheduled through March 7, Ruble said.

The activity will be concentrated in a log house built last year at Prairie Creek Park to house the equipment needed to produce maple syrup.

Horses are used to deliver maple sap from the woods to the evaporating equipment in the log house. The evaporator will be in operation only when there is a sufficient amount of sap to fire the oven, Ruble said.

The art of making maple syrup is one of the oldest arts in the United States, Ruble explains, noting it began over 300 years ago and was a gift to early settlers by the native Indians.

The park department is keeping this old fashioned art alive for the historic and educational benefit of the children and adults of Vigo County, Ruble adds.

Actually, the county park department is using a combination of old and new techniques in the 1979 collection of sugar water from the stand of maple trees near the log house.

Of the approximately 700 taps, about 650 employ buckets to catch the sap. About 50 more taps have been made using about 1,500 feet of special plastic tubing, Ruble said. These are all on a steep hillside at the park.

The use of plastic tubing was pioneered in Vermont some years ago and has worked out successfully, the park superintendent explained.

"It's sterile and sanitary, and there's no chance of debris getting into the sugar water. Also, there's a considerable amount of labor saved (an estimated 50 percent of the cost of making maple syrup is for labor). And, since the tubing flows into large collectors, there's much less damage to the ground," Ruble pointed out.

Since the tubing system creates its

own vacuum, more sap per tap is also produced than with the bucket method, he added.

The rule of thumb is one quart of finished syrup per tap — "if we have a good year," Ruble qualified that statement.

This year's yield could be about 150 gallons of maple syrup, he said. This will be sold in several size containers.

Not that the sales will create much additional revenue for the park department, though. Ruble says he hopes to break even.

"We had about one-third of the run last year," Ruble commented.

The cooperation of Mother Nature in providing freezing and thawing conditions is critical to the maple syrup operation, Ruble explained.

"Sap will not run each day during the maple season, due to temperature variations. When the temperature gets 10 degrees or more above freezing, we get what we call a 'sap run.' This means the sugar water will drip from the trees for two to four days and then stops dripping and does not start again until it freezes again," the park superintendent said.

When the sap is collected from the buckets or piping the tubing system, it is poured into stationary tanks close to the sugar house to be piped into the evaporator.

The evaporator is a large pan in which the sugar water is heated. The concentrated syrup is drawn off from the evaporator into a finishing pan for the final step.

(over)



SUGAR TIME — Vigo County Park and Recreation Superintendent Keith Ruble has been busy in recent days, making taps on hundreds of sugar maple trees at Prairie Creek Park in preparation for the second annual maple syrup operation here. Larry Owen, district forester from the

Shakamak forestry office, was on hand to pick up a few pointers from Ruble on the syrup making process. Tours for school groups are being arranged. An authentic log house was built at the park last year to house the equipment to produce maple syrup.

House of Photography

How sweet it is!

TS JAN 8 1978

Parks & Recreation (Vigo Co.)

2026

Vigo starts maple syrup camp

Community Affairs File

By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

Vigo County is entering into "friendly competition" with Parke County in maple syrup making and marketing this year — but it's going to be on a small scale.

The action will be at Prairie Creek Park in late February and early March. Vigo County Park and Recreation Superintendent Keith Ruble said the county park system isn't planning to go into the maple syrup business in a big way, just break even.

In preparation for the season, workmen are completing a log building with a lean-to for the whole syrup-making operation.

This cabin was built in 1858, and is a gift to the park department from a Vermillion County couple, Mary and Ritchie Harrington.

While the cabin has a few "modern conveniences," the overall look is "authentic old-fashioned," Ruble said. It does have a concrete floor, fireplace, plumbing — but wiring is underground.

For processing, the equipment (costing about \$3,800) includes a large evaporator and a storage tank to hold 400 to 500 gallons of sugar water.

Prairie Creek Park is a "natural" for the maple camp. This area contains a large stand of sugar maples. Taps will be made on 350 to 400 trees, Ruble said.

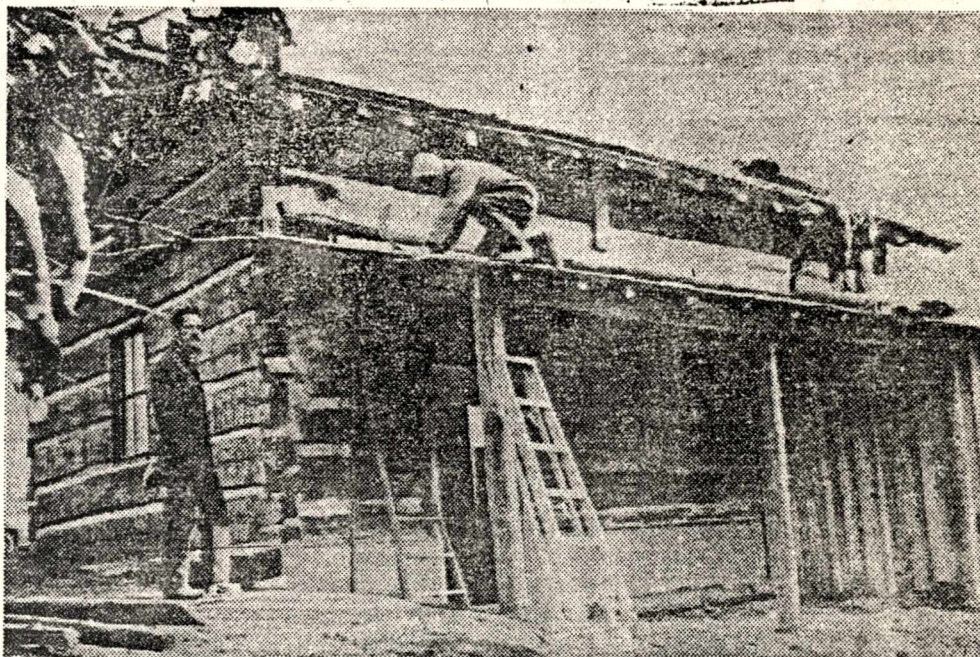
Sap will flow best, Ruble noted, when temperatures get down to freezing at night and in the 30s and 40s daytimes. The freezing and thawing process makes for ideal conditions for the sap to run.

One tap per tree will result in about a quart of maple syrup — if there's a good flow, Ruble said. It takes from 40 to 50 gallons of sugar water to make a gallon of syrup.

Another authentic touch will be to fire the evaporator with wood. An ample supply of sassafras has been given to the park department to get the 1978 season started.

A battery-powered drill will be used to make the taps. To collect the sap, the park department will be using clear plastic containers (about four-gallon capacity) donated by Doxsee Foods.

And to haul the sap from the trees to the maple camp, Junior



THIS IS THE PLACE — Workmen are finishing this log cabin at Prairie Creek Park, which will be the scene in late February and early March of Vigo County's first maple festival. Superintendent Keith Ruble of the County Park and Recreation Department is striving for authenticity in the re-creation of an old-time maple camp. The cabin dates back to 1858. It was the gift of Mary and Ritchie Farrington of Vermillion County. Equipment will be installed shortly, so visitors to the park can see the operation of an old-fashioned maple syrup camp. The response to the Pioneer Village at Fowler Park has been so great that Ruble and the County Park Board were enthusiastic about the maple camp. Prairie Creek Park is a natural, as it has between 350 and 400 sugar maples that can be tapped. Old timers say the area was part of an old sugar camp many years ago.
House of Photography

(over)

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE

DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library

Hunt and his locally famous tsam of Percherons will assist.

"It's a lot of work," Ruble admits, but adds that there's not much to do outside in late February or early March, and the maple festival will be a

good, interesting, educational and enjoyable activity for entire families.

"Basically, maple syrup

making is a dying art," Ruble commented, adding that "you don't see it much any more."

The tremendous response to the Pioneer Village at Fowler Park proved to him, Ruble said, that people were greatly interested in a return to things past.

He thinks the small investment at Prairie Creek Park will be used and enjoyed for many years to come. Special invitations have been extended to Vigo County schools for field trips to the park during the maple season.

The art of making maple syrup is one of the oldest arts in the United States, Ruble pointed out, adding that it began over 300 years ago and was a gift to the early settlers by the native Indians.

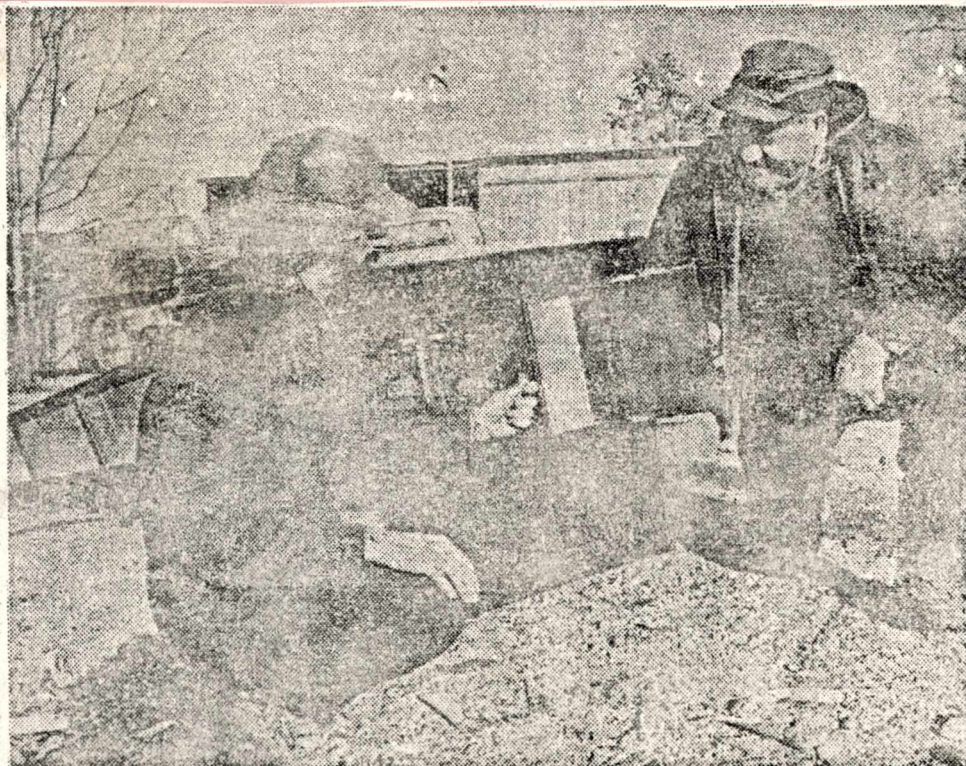
The amount of maple syrup to be produced at Prairie Creek this year will depend on how well Mother Nature cooperates in providing the right weather conditions. Ruble notes that the cost runs to \$15 to \$16 a gallon. The syrup will be available in pints, quarts, half gallons and gallons, he said.

The county park board has been enthusiastic about the mid-winter project and has given it unanimous approval.

Ruble has been developing his own expertise in making maple syrup after several years experience with his own "cottage industry" at his home.

In planning for a maple camp in Vigo County, Ruble received much help and advice from Archie Foxworthy of Parke County, who also runs an old-fashioned, wood-fired operation.

The syrup will be canned at about 200 degrees Fahrenheit (high enough to kill a good many bacteria).



EVAPORATOR ARRIVES — Vigo County Park and Recreation Department staffers Steve Fonner and Rance Clawson will install this large evaporator, made in Vermont, in the county's first maple camp at Prairie Creek Park. A regular maple syrup-making operation will get under way by the end of February. About 350 to 400 sugar maples will be tapped. Visitors to the park will be able to take a step backward in time, as they observe the time-honored and timetested process of converting maple sap into syrup.

Parks and Recreation (Vigo Co.) include pictures

Maple syrup harvested

Community Affairs

T FEB 23 1980

By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

Vigo County's first "crop" of 1980 maple syrup has been "harvested" at Prairie Creek Park, according to County Park and Recreation Superintendent Keith Ruble.

The syrup-making operation began Thursday, and will continue as long as the sap flows from more than 700 taps on about 450 sugar maple trees at the county park located south of Terre Haute.

This is the third year for the maple sugar camp at Prairie Creek Park. The activity is concentrated in a log

house (Farrington's Sugar Cabbin) originally built in 1858 in Vermillion County and "transplanted" several years ago.

The park department is keeping the old-fashioned art of making maple syrup alive for the historic and educational benefit of children and adults of Vigo County, Ruble stresses.

Arrangements have been made for many school children to tour the maple sugar camp during the next few weeks, the park superintendent said. He advises visitors to "dress warmly and wear waterproof footgear."

The park department is not exactly in the business of making a profit on its maple syrup operation, Ruble stresses. Usually they break even. An estimated 50 percent of the cost of making maple syrup is for labor. The finished product is available in several size containers — gallon, quart and pint.

Unlike the long-established maple festival in Parke County, the Vigo County version at Prairie Creek concentrates on how the syrup is made, with a few modern touches added. No pancakes, no sausage, nothing commercial, though.

The cooperation of Mother Nature in providing appropriate freezing and thawing conditions is necessary for a good maple syrup year. To date, 1980 has not been ideal. Ruble is hoping for a good cold night, to provide impetus for the peak flow of sugar water.

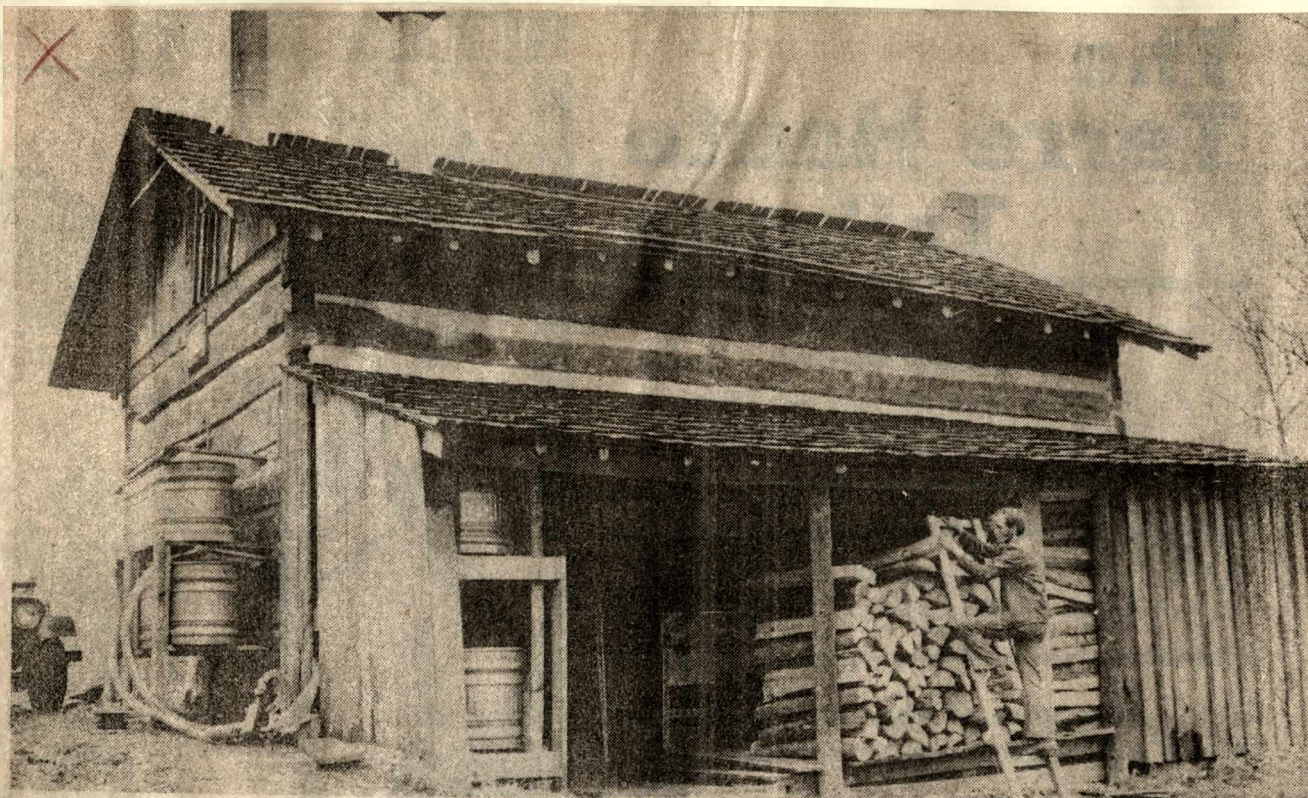
For the second year, the park department is using a combination of old and new techniques for collecting the sap. The old-fashioned way involves hanging buckets on trees to catch the flow. In another part of the park, where the hillside is steep, another collection system using special plastic tubing saves a lot of labor and prevents damage to the ground.

The sugar water flows through the tubing into a large collector, and then is taken to the sugar cabin.

The old-fashioned transportation system of sap from other parts of the woods is provided by Junior Hunt and his matched pair of Percherons, Ted and Tom, pulling a wagon. They make several trips each day.

To fire the evaporator, ash logs (cut, split and dried a year ago) are used. Ruble said the wood was obtained free when the trees were cut from Prairie Creek bottoms as part

(over)



SUGAR CABIN — The maple syrup-making activity is concentrated at this log cabin, originally built in 1858 in Vermillion County and re-

constructed at Prairie Creek Park several years ago. Earl Slavens, park foreman, on the ladder, checks logs.
Staff Photo/Curt Willis

Maple Syrup Time Machine

Visitors get a taste of the past at the Prairie Creek Park log cabin.

Ah, pure maple syrup -- the taste is sweet, but the price is bitter.

The syrup at \$17 a gallon elevates mere pancakes to a princely meal. Even a measly pint will reduce three dollar bills to four bits. Confesses one of the semi-expert taste testers at Prairie Creek Park, as he slurps a sip of syrup, most folks plain couldn't tell the difference between the homemade variety and that additive-laden, store-bought stuff.

And yet the eight Vigo County Park Department men can't turn out the stuff fast enough to meet demand. In a world of imagination this, concentrated that and artificially flavored whatchamacallit, the concept of something pure appeals to people. The setting where the delicious homemade goo is produced adds to the mystique. Prairie Creek Park, about 15 miles south of Terre Haute, is a time machine which transports visitors to a 19th century wilderness and frontier.

For only two to three weeks a year the sap flows in the maple trees. Finicky Mother Nature, never known for her cooperativeness toward man, must provide nights with below freezing temperatures and days with above freezing temperatures for ideal sap conditions. Park department staffers comb the steep hills thick with trees. They install about 800 taps on some 400 trees. When the weather is right, two black horses draw a vat (six feet long and about three feet deep) mounted on a wooden sled. A peppy coon dog heckles the horses. The men empty the buckets from the trees into the vat. The horses return the vat to a house which, although built in 1978 by park department personnel, seemingly dates back to the 1850s.

A suction line draws the raw sap out of the vat into another one within the house. From there it is fed through a furnace with a brick facade. A man stokes the furnace by hand with wood. Steam billows up from the sides of the furnace and fogs the glasses on people. The steam carries the aroma as the steam is piped up a flue. The flue is metal, one of the few concessions made in the nearly all wood and brick structure. The flue releases a billowing cloud of steam announcing that the sap season is in progress.

Visitors exit the house through raising a bolt on a wooden door. As the door closes behind them, visitors re-enter the world of the 20th Century. It was fun while it lasted.

The sap will start flowing sometime in late February, according to Keith Ruble of the Vigo County Park Department. The department will sell the syrup for \$2.50 a pint, \$9 a half gallon and \$17 for a gallon. Call the Park Department at 238-8391 for more information on availability of syrup as well as school tours of Prairie Creek Park.



**PARKE COUNTY
18th Annual
Maple Fair
March 1-2
ROCKVILLE**

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE



'Sweet season' almost here

Art of making maple syrup alive and well

By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

The old-fashioned art of making maple syrup is alive and well in Vigo County.

The "sweet season" is almost here at Prairie Creek Park, as Keith Ruble, Vigo County Park and Recreation superintendent, and park employees prepare for several weeks of "show, taste and tell" during the fourth annual "Maple Sugar Days."

It's all free — unless of course, you want to buy some of the finished product.

The exact dates aren't known yet — but Ruble says late February and early March. It all depends on Mother Nature's providing the ideal freezing and thawing conditions which cause the sugar water to run.

Tree-tapping was practically completed last week, Ruble said. About 400 trees are providing some 900 taps. The rule of thumb is one quart of finished syrup per tap — in a good year.

Collection of the sugar water involves a combination of old and new techniques. The traditional buckets are used to catch the sap in some parts of the park, while a collector system of special plastic tubing has been installed on a steep hillside.

Horses are used to pull a gathering tank through the woods to collect sap from buckets. The sugar water from the tubing system flows into large collectors, advantageous because it cuts down on labor and prevents damage to the hillside.

The actual syrup making operation takes place in a hand-hewn log house of native white oak built in 1852 in Vermillion County. It was donated to the county park department by Richard Farrington. In the reconstruction, a half-basement of creek stone from Dearborn County was built.

Completing the sugar cabin are a stone fireplace, a stone arch for the evaporator and a lean-to shelter for a processing room. The sap is stored in an underground tank at the sugar cabin and then pumped up to a gravity flow tank to the evaporating pan.

The syrup-making process continues as water is evaporated from the sweet sugar until the boiling point reaches 7 degrees Fahrenheit above the boiling point of water. The syrup is then filtered through two synthetic filters and packaged in

'It's an obsession': Ruble

"It's an obsession," Keith Ruble confesses about his predilection for making maple syrup every year.

Before he established the sugar camp at Prairie Creek Park in 1978, Ruble had had the benefit of several years experience from his own "cottage industry."

"I paid \$375 for an evaporating pan and then had to build a log house to put it in," he explained. He now makes about 10 to 15 gallons of maple syrup in his own sugar camp every year.

Ruble is running 72 taps from trees at his home and from five adjacent properties of neighbors.

After supervising the syrup-making operation at Prairie Creek Park, the county park and recreation superintendent then tackles the same work on a smaller scale at his home. His wife, Susie, and the kids assist.

several sizes of glass and plastic containers for sale to park visitors.

Not that the sales will create much additional revenue for the park department, though. It's the labor that's expensive. The park department just hopes to break even.

Even though the county park department hasn't really announced the 1981 "Maple Sugar Days," Ruble already has four or five advance bookings for school group tours. He'll be assisted this year by Area Extension Agent John Hancewicz in explaining the process of making maple syrup, one of the oldest arts in the United States. Early settlers learned it from native Indians.

The making of maple syrup in Vigo County is not new by any means, Ruble emphasizes. "Old timers" can recall sugar camps in several townships. Maple sugar and honey were the primary sweeteners up until about 1860, when sugar cane became economical to grow, Ruble noted.

It's best to check with the county park department, 238-8391, to find out when the actual syrup



TREE-TAPPING TIME — Earl Slavens, foreman at Prairie Creek Park, holds a plastic bucket to catch maple sap as Forrest "Frosty" Whitkanack, a Green Thumb worker, drills a three-inch deep taphole in a maple tree as part of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department's Maple Sugar Days coming up soon.

making is in progress during the next few weeks. Brochures about "Maple Sugar Days" will be available next week, Ruble said. They also contain a map showing location of the park in southwestern Vigo County.